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Minutes of an Extraordinary meeting of the Board of the EHRC

24th October 2023 (08:45 to 09:00)

Held: Remotely on Teams

Attending

Non recused Commissioners

Lesley Sawers (Interim Deputy Chair), Joanne Cash (JC), David Goodhart (DG), Kunle Olulode (KO), Akua Reindorf (AR), Jess Butcher (JB).

Officers

Amanda Topham (AT) – Head of Corporate Law and Information Governance (Minutes)

1. Interim Deputy Chair's welcome and apologies

- 1.1 The Interim Deputy Chair welcomed attendees to the extraordinary board meeting.
- 1.2 The Interim Deputy Chair noted the absence of Marcial Boo (CEO), [Redacted - Personal data], Su-Mei Thompson (Commissioner) [Redacted - Personal data], and Kishwer Falkner (Chairwoman), Alasdair Henderson and Eryl Besse (Commissioners) and Cath Denholm (Acting CEO) who were all recused from attending because of potential conflicts of interest.

2. Interim Deputy Chair's statement

- 2.1 The Interim Deputy Chair recorded that the non-recused members of the Board held an informal session earlier this morning. She confirmed that no decisions were made at that meeting.
- 2.2 The Interim Deputy Chair read the following statement:

“In summary, I advised the non recused members of the Board that I took a call from the Secretary of State on Friday 20 October, following a private letter I had sent to her office that morning. We discussed the findings of her review by a KC, of the conduct of the investigation into the Chairwoman, and whether correct processes had been followed.

I can confirm that I received a strictly private and confidential letter from the Secretary of State on the 23 October 2023, with guidance for the EHRC in respect of the paused investigation into the Chairwoman. The broad findings, I have already shared with you in our informal session held at 8.00 am this morning. In addition, further material developments have come to light of which, I, as Interim Deputy Chair, responsible for this investigation, and the non recused Board have been completely unaware of. It is evident that this information has also had an impact on the investigation.

I have therefore consulted non-recused members of the Board as appropriate today and will be making a final decision on this matter which I will communicate to those concerned very shortly.

I also want to give reassurances to non-recused Board members that I will work with the Executive team to ensure that we notify relevant stakeholders of that decision as appropriate.”

- 2.3 The Interim Deputy Chair then reminded everyone of the highly confidential nature of this discussion, particularly until this matter is fully concluded.
- 2.4 The Interim Deputy Chair asked Board members if they had any comments or questions. None were received.
- 2.5 AR then thanked the Interim Deputy Chair for all the work she was doing in relation to this matter.
- 2.6 The Interim Deputy Chair thanked everyone for making time at such short notice to attend both this Extraordinary Board meeting and the informal session.

3. AOB

- 3.1 With no other business, the Interim Deputy Chair closed the meeting.